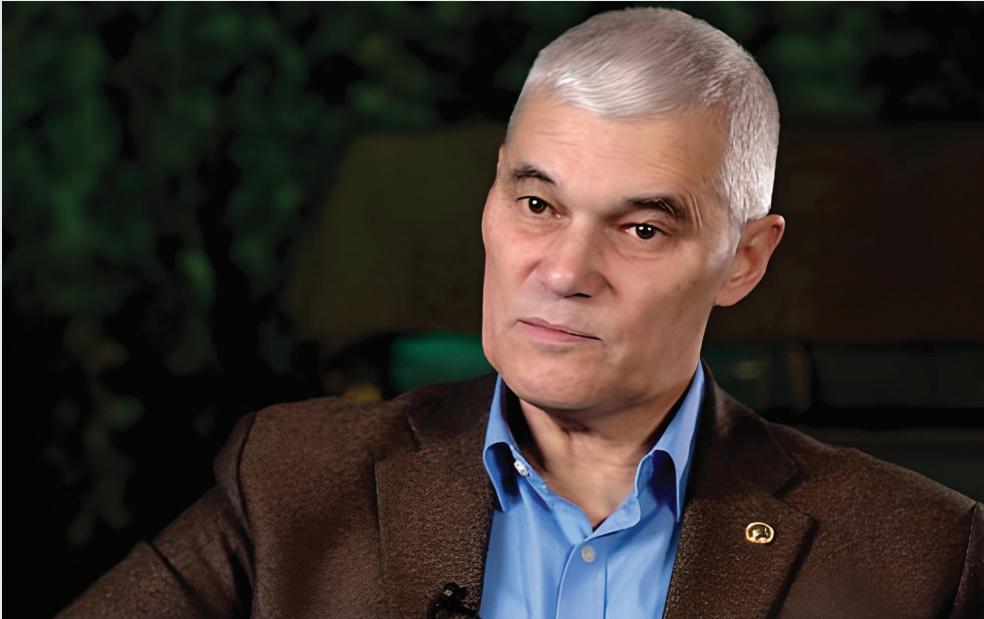


Retired Admiral Dr. Konstantin Sivkov

"US build-up in Greece targets both Türkiye and Russia"



After graduating from the A.S. Popov Higher Naval Radio Electronics School in 1976, he served in the USSR Navy from 1976 to 1985. After graduating from the Naval Academy command faculty in 1987, he gave lectures in the A.A. Grechko Department of Naval Management. In 1992, he graduated from the main course of the Military Academy of the General Staff, after which he was asked to enter the doctoral program at the academy. After completing his doctorate studies, he worked at the RF Armed Forces General Staff Military-Strategic Research Center between 1995 and 2007. Since 2012, he has been working as a columnist for the weekly Military Industrial Courier magazine. He holds a doctorate in military sciences. Between 2013 and March 2015, he was the President of the Academy of Geopolitical Issues. He is the Vice President of the Russian Academy of Missile and Artillery Sciences.

“The common strategy of all multipolar world countries, including Türkiye, Russia, China, India, and Iran, has an element of joining forces against the Western bloc. And I believe this union is the one that will stop a nuclear World War III. Türkiye does not obey the orders of the USA, establishes independent policies, and maintains good relations with Russia, all of which the USA does not like at all. Under these circumstances, the US wants to take the reins of Türkiye back into its own hands, and for this purpose, it organized a coup attempt against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2016. This coup attempt was defeated with the support of Russia as well, but the USA began to besiege Türkiye from every angle. Türkiye has started to take some measures against this siege passing through Greece and Southern Cyprus. This siege aims to engulf both Türkiye and Russia. This should be clearly understood. These bases are primarily aimed at Türkiye, then towards Russia. The containment of Russia is also achieved by other means, but at this point, Türkiye is a key target in the eyes of the United States.”

Retired Admiral Dr. Konstantin Sivkov, Vice President of the Academy of Missile and Artillery Sciences of the Russian Ministry of Defense, answered Kubilay Çelik’s questions.

In the naval doctrine adopted by Russia in August, the Eastern Mediterranean was counted among "regions that significantly affect the country’s economic development, people’s welfare and national security". What is the significance of the Eastern Mediterranean for Russia today?

Dr. Konstantin Sivkov: The Mediterranean is of great importance to Russia. The first factor here is, of course, the safety factor. Underneath this lies the fact that the famous 6th Fleet of the USA is located here. Long-range missiles from these ships can be used to target Russia. In the event of an attack against Russia, destroying and disabling these aircraft carriers is a critically important task in eliminating a threat formation.

For this reason, the presence of Russia in the region is also very important from a military point of view. The second important point is that the leading countries of the Arab world in the region follow a more friendly policy towards Russia, and I think Russia-Türkiye relations are now of great importance for Russia. We are Russians. We remain true to the principle of supporting our allies under any cir-

cumstances. To support this union, Russia provided military and economic support to many countries, even though it is not officially an ally. Because under the leadership of our country, there are people, peoples and states who hope for help from us. The Islamic world is experiencing a new renaissance, but the ideas of extremists in the region, which are hostile to Russia and Islam, are trying to portray Islam as a destructive religion. They are parasites, and this understanding only brings destruction. Hiding behind the Islamic flag, they form terrorist organizations such as the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), which is banned in Russia, and other similar structures. These are the most active at the moment.

Under these conditions, the Arab world continues to get closer to Russia, primarily for security reasons, and it turns out that there are people who fear Russia’s suppression of such terrorist acts. Economically, the Mediterranean has always been one of the centers of economic development of human civilization since the Ancient Romans. The Mediterranean is also of great economic importance today. Therefore, economically, Russia is interested in being in this region.



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, where he was attending the 6th Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). (October 13, 2022) (Official Website of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2022)

Moscow's Intervention in Ukraine is in the Interest of Türkiye's Sovereignty and Independence

It is seen that the USA is trying to build a front with Greece, Israel and Southern Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean. What do you think is the goal of this? How does this affect the objectives set by Russia in its strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean?

Dr. Konstantin Sivkov: Recall that until a while ago, before the current President Erdogan came to power in Türkiye, there were no problems with Greece. Türkiye mainly maintained this stance. The policy adopted in the previous period was the most important thing that kept Türkiye and Russia apart in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Türkiye started to follow a more inde-

pendent roadmap. Yes, sometimes, many people can be uncomfortable with this situation. Russia, too, can sometimes be disturbed by President Erdogan's policy in relations with republics such as Azerbaijan, which was established after the Soviet Union. However, in general, Recep Tayyip Erdogan follows a dominant Türkiye policy, and at this point, Türkiye and Russia are among the few countries that can achieve this. Türkiye does not obey the orders of the USA, establishes independent policies, and maintains good relations with Russia, all of which the USA does not like at all. Our Honorable President Putin pulled a new rabbit out of the hat at this point and said that they wanted to establish a natural gas hub in Türkiye. This project not only gives Türkiye economic power but also makes Türkiye a key state in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean in general.

So, these are all indications that Russia is advocating Türkiye's full sovereignty, as it should, even if there are some existing frictions between Russia and Türkiye. Under these conditions, the U.S. wants to take the reins of Türkiye back into its own hands, and for this purpose, it organized a coup attempt against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2016. This coup attempt was defeated with the support of Russia, but the USA began to besiege Türkiye from every angle. Türkiye has started to take measures against this siege passing through Greece and Southern Cyprus. This siege aims to engulf both Türkiye and Russia.

This should be clearly understood. They tried to stage a coup in 2016 and failed, but they will continue to work in this direction. It will change shape, but they will continue to work to make Türkiye controllable again. Russia is launching a special operation against Ukraine because the U.S. targets in Ukraine and Russia are the same. In general, the USA and the Western world set the goal of making Russia a controllable country. Putin launched a special operation against the puppet state of Ukraine to secure Russia's maritime zone.

Nevertheless, there are other means of controlling Russia. They want to take control of the Russian nuclear potential and impose impositions on everyone, including Türkiye, using combined American-Western nuclear power. That is why today, Russia is entering Ukraine. This war is fought not only for Russia's independence and sovereignty but also for Türkiye's independence and sovereignty. This needs to be well understood. The pressure on Türkiye continues not only with the siege in the Eastern Mediterranean but also economically.

US Military Buildup in the Eastern Mediterranean Against Türkiye More Than Russia

The United States expanded military cooperation agreements with Greece and deployed troops to 22 separate military bases in the country. It activated a large-scale naval base in Crete and

started the construction of a land and naval base in Alexandroupolis on the Turkish border. Finally, the U.S. administration lifted the military embargo on Southern Cyprus, which it had maintained for 35 years. There is a debate in Türkiye: While some argue that the USA is putting a military siege against Türkiye and Russia with this military buildup, another segment argues that the target of the USA is Russia, not Türkiye. What do you think the USA is aiming for?

Dr. Konstantin Sivkov: All these measures mentioned, namely the deployment of U.S. military bases in the south of Crete, and the deployment of 22 military bases in Greece, are concrete examples of the U.S. policy of isolating Türkiye from the Mediterranean and North Africa. This is the natural direction of movement of the Turkish state in North Africa during the Ottoman Empire. Later, Western countries took control of these countries in North Africa and naturally, they do not allow Türkiye to return to this region. Due to objective factors, the Eastern Mediterranean region is important for Russia and Türkiye. That's why these military bases are against both Türkiye and Russia. The West does not want Türkiye's political and economic influences to extend beyond its geography.

The West finds the concept of a Turkish society loyal to its traditional values to be promoted not only in the country but also in foreign policy by President Erdogan as hostile to itself and adopts a confrontational approach. Therefore, these bases are primarily aimed at Türkiye and, to a lesser extent, Russia. The containment of Russia is also achieved by other means, but at this point, Türkiye is a key target in the eyes of the United States. I want to remind you that the United States has supported and continues to support several Kurdish terrorist organizations that threaten Türkiye's territorial integrity. So much so that this is not only verbal support but also the support of money and weapons.



The SCO summit took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on September 16. (Li Tao/Xinhua, 2022)

The Common Strategy of the Countries Defending the Multipolar World is to Join Forces

In addition to the Eastern Mediterranean, the United States creates instability through direct military interventions in major seas such as the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Arctic Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Yemen Sea, and many other seas and waterways, large and small. Russia, China, Iran, Türkiye and other countries in the mentioned regions are struggling with similar threats coming from the same source, originating from the USA. What strategy should these countries follow in their relations and against the USA to eliminate these threats?

Dr. Konstantin Sivkov: Today, the 3rd World War has started and continues at full speed. The proxy wars that the USA started against Russia over Ukraine, which was the beginning of the 3rd World War, are coming to an end. The United States considered the shooting of the Ukrainian forces showing maximum loyalty to the U.S. as an attack against it and launched a challenge against Russia. On the other hand, European countries continue to give credit to this chal-

lenge, leaving them in very difficult conditions next winter. Remember that any world war is always waged by alliances. The US-led Western alliance has already been formed and is running smoothly. The name of this alliance, which includes all Western civilizations but is actually the military organization of a single country, the USA, is NATO. Western civilization is acting very clearly in this war against Russia.

This situation continues, albeit partially, against Türkiye. However, the forces trying to build a multipolar world have been fighting these forces without compromise and fiercely for a fair world order and a beautiful future, not for one year, not for ten years, but for a century. Countries that support a multipolar world order still adhere to this principle. As it claims, Türkiye is truly an independent and sovereign state within the global system. It does not accept to be a dependent power to the USA and therefore, it is a target. In other words, these are the countries that believed in the multipolar world model and acted faithfully to it, the countries that needed to be consolidated for the USA.

But here, there is a positive alternative to the USA: SCO and BRICS. These organizations, accepted by the whole world, create a tendency towards for-

ming a multipolar world. They transformed from purely economic organizations into organizations with a certain political and military-political stance. We can see this, especially at the summit in Samarkand. In the Samarkand Declaration of the SCO, all member countries declared that they would engage in an active joint struggle against various types of hybrid wars and economic aggressions from third countries.

Moreover, it's a very strong magnet. In other words, the common strategy of all multipolar world countries, including Türkiye, Russia, China, India and Iran, aims to join forces against the Western bloc. I think this union is the one that will stop the 3rd World War, which has already started, before it turns into a nuclear war. Therefore, the struggle in this direction continues.

The Astana Platform, formed by Türkiye, Russia and Iran, has achieved very important progress in ensuring the territorial integrity of Syria in the last five years. What role does the Astana partnership play in resolving conflicts between these three countries and regional problems in Western Asia? Can it play a greater role? What needs to be done about this?

Dr. Konstantin Sivkov: This is a very important model, of course, because these three countries, Russia, Iran and Türkiye, are the key players that determine the overall policy and situation. For example, the role of this trio in the Middle East determines the situation in the region. This alliance has defeated all U.S. attempts to infiltrate the region, allowing it to escape Afghanistan shamefully. But of course, certain frictions and problems continue within this trio. In addition to situations where everyone is united in their interests, they are often separated for petty personal interests. Common interests are establishing a multipolar world order, establishing friendly relations in the Middle East in general, and confronting the West, a very serious and formidable enemy that claims to dominate the world.

I must indicate that, unfortunately, the Turkish government hasn't shown its resolve to end the Syrian

conflict. It is unthinkable to ensure the security of the countries of the region within the scope of this policy of Türkiye. Maybe this is not the best solution, but Russia is ready to do anything to establish a common policy in this Idlib cauldron. However, it seems that the Turkish side is not ready for this yet, and time is passing.

The SCO Will Become the Largest World Club that Determines World Peace for the Next Decades

The SCO aims at economic cooperation and security and has taken important steps in this area. In addition to the SCO, the Belt and Road Initiative, initiated under China's and Russia's leadership, aims to build the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century. Stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, an important sea route between Asia, Europe and Africa, is also important within the scope of KYG. Considering the position of the Eastern Mediterranean within the scope of the KYG, what kind of a relationship can be mentioned between the interests of Türkiye, Russia and China in the region? In this context, is there an overlap or antagonism between the interests of the mentioned countries?

Dr. Konstantin Sivkov: There are different contradictions, and there will always be contradictions, but the decision to jointly defend all member states against threats from third countries in the published declaration shows that all these contradictions have been pushed aside. The Belt and Road program is being developed against common threats that may come from now on.

I want to remind you that Russia not only supports the development of the Eastern Mediterranean on the Belt and Road Initiative but also cooperates with China to develop the Northern Sea Route. Stretching from the North and the South, from Europe to China, the goals and future of this organization are much more important than the small disagreements between us. The SCO will develop and become the largest world club that truly determines world peace for the next decades and maybe even centuries. 🌸